

AND SO THEY CAME,
THE POLISH IMMIGRANTS.

BY: LORRAINE KING

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A N D S O T H E Y C A M E,

The Polish Immigrants.

By: Lorraine King

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Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

-Inscription on the Statue of Liberty

When these lines were written in 1886 by Emma Lazarus, they expressed the feeling of a great many people in the United states. They expressed it for different reasons. To the compassionate they meant what Miss Lazarus meant, that America should be a haven for the poor, the hungry, and the oppressed of all lands. A haven where, freed of the political and social and economic shackles that made them wretched, they could stand upright. Others, millions of others, wanted the lamp to shine bright for more personal reasons. They wanted the golden door held wide because many on those teeming shores, in varying degrees of consanguinity, were their relatives. They wanted to bring families and friends and neighbors to this new land of opportunity and hope. Still others wanted those huddled masses to come here for the sake of America itself. They wanted them, desperately, as hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Ellis Island became the principal inspection depot for newcomers. To many of the immigrants the name Ellis Island became a memory of red tape. The doctors were on the hunt for communicable diseases. Those who were afflicted were sent back. Once the arrivals had passed inspection, they faced a bewildering world.

The work he did in Poland will be different from the work he will do in this country. Even more important is the change from a country to a city environment.

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To the millions of European immigrants America is a blessed country. While approaching the misty shores of New York during the pre-war era, the first thing every European immigrant eagerly looked for was the Statue of Liberty. They knew about its majestic splendor long before their journey across the ocean. A new world stretched out before them,-- a world full of countless opportunities to prosper.

Once having set foot on American soil, each immigrant had to face and solve, in his own way, many problems. The utmost one was, of course, securing a job. Had they possessed the knowledge of the English language, this problem would not have seemed so desperate to them.

It is said that the first three years are the hardest for the immigrant in America. The friendly neighbors and evening classes helped the immigrant adjust themselves to the American way of life.

The immigrants are thankful and consider themselves blessed by the divine mercy of God that they live here--- in the land of liberty. And, they value such true liberty above all, because they were once deprived of it and now have the opportunity to appreciate its full deep meaning. ¹.

¹. Magazine, Public Welfare in Indiana. Article: "The Voice Of An Immigrant", page 6. Author: Luben Dimitroff, August 1945.

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One of the earliest nationality groups to migrate to Gary and now the largest group were the Poles.

Early records indicate more than one thousand (1,000) Poles settled in the Calumet Region by the year 1890, enough to organize the first Polish church, namely: St. Stanislaus Parish in East Chicago in 1896.

Economic reasons prompted most of the pre-World War I Calumet Polish immigrants to leave their native land. At the time Poland was primarily a rural society which had trouble supporting its booming population.

Census figures show that in 1920 most Polish immigrants were peasants. Only 5.1 per cent were classified as "skilled laborers".

At the time of the census East Chicago, Indiana held, the bulk of native born Polish population, about 4,000, Gary had about 2,000. By 1960, it had risen to 20,000 in Gary, Indiana.

Poor travel conditions between East Chicago and Gary sparked the Poles to build their own church at 17th and Connecticut Streets, which is now call St. Hedwigs Church.

Land for the church was donated by the Gary Land Company. The land was sold around the mid-town area to the Poles for construction. Frank Zawadzski opened a tavern at 12th Avenue and Broadway in 1906. Valerian Fabianski opened the first furniture store in 1906. John Wasiliewski was the contractor for the new Polish church.

The church quickly became the center of activity for the growing Polish community. In 1909, St. Hedwig's pastor, Father Kahellek had over 120 families. The debt was a little over \$1,000.00 on their new church. In 1911, the parish grew to 200 families.

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Settlers surrounded the parish from 15th and 20th Avenues and Broadway and Georgia Streets. Later, Gary Land Company opened a new subdivision east of Broadway between 11th and 15th Avenues.

Although many foreign immigrant groups dwelling together and near their respective churches, the Polish housing pattern closely resembled the geographic ghettos of larger cities. However, the multiple dwelling unit trademark of large city ghetto was absent.

Merciless exploitation by many merchants and straw bosses on many labor crews are given as the reasons for the "clannish" nature of the early Poles. At first they thought they could trust their own fellow countrymen.

By 1930, there were more than 50 Polish organizations in Gary and although the churches still dominated certain segments of civic life, organizations were started to specialize in various community activities. They were: the Chopin Chorus, and the Silver Bell Club, both in 1916 and 1925 respectively. Tony Zale, the two-time world middle weight boxing champion was one of the first participants in the Gary Silver Bell boxing program. 2.

2. The Gary Post-Tribune. Date of Issue: December 17, 1965.
Page 7.

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The children attended church schools so that they would not be "sucked into American life" so rapidly that they forget the "mother" tongue. From the first day in school the child was taught their prayers and catechetical instruction in Polish. They would have performances on the stage in Polish, only to step down from the stage and converse in English with their school friends.

The training in the Polish parochial school was different from the public school. The parochial school was a necessary expression of the immigrant for self-preservation and self-development.

In 1952, Mr. Lucian Markiewicz opened a Polish School for children of the "new" immigrants who wanted to read and write the Polish language.

Opinions regarding the use of the Polish press in the United States is divided.

Some feel it dulls the edge of Americanization. I feel that the Polish press has performed an important mission. The Polish people were ignorant of the English language. The press was instrumental and beneficial for acquainting them with the American way of life. A large number of the immigrants would lack the necessary information for good citizenship. They also desired news of their home country. Almost everyone found a few extra pennies for their favorite daily.

There were also papers put out by the Polish Roman Catholic Union and the Polish National Alliance. The PRCU published the

"Narod Polski" which is the Polish Nation in translation. The PNA published "Zgoda" which translated means Peace. This newspaper is still circulated today. These papers have assisted in the process of economic adjustment. They offered the immigrants information on employment opportunities, advice on legal problems, and information on the work of various Polish organizations.

"Zgoda" especially urged immigrants to learn the English language and the American way of life. The "Narod Polski" had more of a religious theme. This paper was discontinued in 1939. The following practical articles did appear in "Narod Polski": "Material Value of an Education",³ "How to Understand Education",⁴ and "Why Polish Women Should Study English".⁵

In 1936, the Polish radio program by Mr. Ed Oskierlo on WWAE, which is now WJOB did originate.

In 1924, the International Institute revealed in a nationality study that the Polish population in Gary was 8,500. They lived in the area of Eight and Ninth Avenues East of Broadway to Pulaski School and to Seventeenth and Connecticut. The Tolleston area from Fifteenth to Twenty-fifth Avenues West of Broadway. The Glen Park section had no set pattern. ⁶.

³ Narod Polski, "Materyalna Wartosc Oswiaty. Issue: October 5, 1910. Page 4.

⁴ Narod Polski, "Jak Rozumiec Oswiati". Issue November 16, 1910. Page 4.

⁵ Narod Polski, "O Dobrym Uzytku Czasu". Issue: November 26, 1910. Page 4.

⁶ International Institute Survey of 1924.

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Poland.....Pole.....Polonia.....Polonaise.....Polka are all synonymous with Gary's beginning.

Gary's first Polish citizenry came from Chicago, Illinois in 1906 and 1907 to seek out their fortune in the new steel city. A majority of the Poles have derived their livelihood from Gary's main source of industry---the steel mills, but a great number chose to be self-employed.

The most notable increase in migration of the Poles was made at the turn of the last century when much heralded "land of milk and honey" was their goal.

Some chose the coal mines of Pennsylvania and Virginia. Other preferred the New York and New Jersey industries. In time, a great many drifted to the Midwest---to Chicago, Milwaukee and Detroit.

There were two financial institutions founded by the Poles that could not survive the depression and their closing dealt a severe blow to the welfare of the Polish Community. The American State Bank and the Wchowski Savings and Loan were forced to close their doors.

Gary's Polish Colony had two weekly publications in the period before the depression. The first published in 1917, author and publisher being Anthony Berok under the name of "Glos Ludu" (The People's Voice). The second newspaper was published by John Jasinski and was named "Glos Polonji" or translated as the "Polish People's Voice."

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A Polish movie house was operated by Walter Wawruszkiewicz at 16th and Broadway.

One of the social halls which has witnessed countless weddings, dances and banquets was the White Eagle Hall at 16th and Maryland Streets. To a lesser degree the Pulaski Hall at 19th and Virginia Streets also was a social center. ⁷.

Among the earliest arrivals in the 1906-07 period were the Polish laborers who came from nearby towns.

In 1930 a total of 6,848 Polish people were listed in the census of Gary, of whom 2,702 were foreign born and 4,146 were American born of Polish parents.

In the same census 2,594 were listed as speaking the Polish language.

Poland, however, was submerged for many years and lost its identity as a national unit to great extent and for this reason census figures can not be relied on for the number of Polish people in the United States.

Many Polish people born in Germany, Russia or Austria are listed as Germans, Russians and Austrians.

The three Polish churches of Gary have a combined congregation of 1,600 families and if the average number in the family were five, which is conservative for this group, an estimate

⁷. Gary Post-Tribune, Golden Jubilee Edition, June, 1956, Page 227.

of 8,000 Polish people could be made in Gary.

In one church there have been over 600 marriages and more than 3,000 baptisms recorded.

Most Polish people invested their savings in homes. Very few Polish families are found in basement flats and the majority have utilized what little space they have about their homes as gardens.

It is generally conceded that the people have better homes than they had in Europe.

Most of the Gary Poles came from the German border of Poland. Since education has been compulsory in Germany, these people had an advantage over their compatriots who were under the Russians or the Austrians.

The language and customs of the Poles have been influenced very much by this division and is a hindrance in unifying the group.

Practically all of those who came from German Poland could read and write, but not the ones from other provinces. Most of them came to the United States for employment. The Russian-Pole came for political and religious reasons.

It is estimated that 75 - 90% of the Polish people in Gary came from small villages and were engaged in farming.

There were between 20 to 30 Poles in the grocery business- butcher shops, 10 filling stations, 10 pool rooms, 8 barber shops, 4 hardware stores, 3 repair garages, 3 in clothing stores, 3 in shoe repair, 3 hotels and 4 drug stores. Also, 2 undertakers (funeral homes), 1 restaurant, 1 shoe store, 1 tailor, 1 florist, and 1 furniture store.

In the professional groups, there were 9 lawyers, 3 physicians, 1 dentist, 5 clergymen, 2 teachers, and several nurses. There were also several music teachers.

Polish people are usually active in politics. There were 3,000 to 3,500 voting citizens. Dr. Danielewski was largely responsible for President Hoover's visit to Gary.

A large portion of the Polish people are now English speaking and most men are U. S. Citizens.

It is said that those of the working class have gained many advantages in coming to the United States, but among women of middle class status, there has been a loss as conditions in Europe made it possible for them to secure domestic help at a very low cost. Many of the women have had to work harder in the United States than they did in Europe.

Most of the heads of families of the Polish people are homeowners, and U. S. Citizens. ⁸.

⁸. The Polish People In Gary. Author: Irma Wagner, Executive Secretary of the International Institute. January 1933.

I N T E R V I E W S

With Gary Polish Immigrants - June and July 1970

11.

The Americans who contributed their experiences to me came from various villages in Poland. Their stories from where they came and what they did were typical of any European peasant's background. The poverty of farms, the village church and priest obligations, the strict governmental powers enforced upon them were contributing factors for their leaving Poland.

I have limited myself to a few representative cases. It is only a starting point for research. To appreciate these case studies it must be remembered that these people had a very limited educational opportunity. Their instruction stopped at a primary level.

If at all possible, I would like to help the Polish immigrant show his contribution to Gary's history and more so---American history.

Dead men do not talk and many of their experiences have gone with them. So let not these stories go untold.

Whether Americans care to admit or not, the fact remains that foreign populations founded this country, nursed its infancy and helped it to grow.

I hope this prepared paper can contribute one brick to the great structure of American History and if it helps a growth of understanding of background of the Polish immigrants, I will feel my efforts were rewarded.

CASE HISTORIESI. Mr. and Mrs. John Dolata

This couple lived in Poland and had been employed by aristocracy. The man was a gardener and the wife was an assistant to the chief cook. The man had heard of the opportunity that could be found in America. In 1912, he left Poland to explore this land, hoping shortly to send for his wife. He did not know anyone in the United States and landed in New York. He was informed that new steel mills were opening in Gary, Indiana and needed people regardless if they were unskilled. One year later in 1912, the wife decided she would surprise her husband and come to Gary. She only had a post office box number to locate him in Gary. She arrived by train at the depot at 10th and Broadway. It was early in the morning when she arrived in Gary. Speaking only Polish she hailed some workers who were on their way to work and showed them the name of her husband. They referred her to another group of men who were able to show her the way to the butcher at 19th and Delaware Streets. The butcher who knew everyone around the area helped her locate her husband. Needless to say, the husband was shocked. He had been living in a home renting a room with meals at 16th and Carolina Streets. The home and area were surrounded with sand dunes. The next move was to a three room apartment that they shared with ten (10) other people. The system was worked that they took turns sleeping. The reason ten people shared three rooms was the fact that Gary at that time had only one tavern-hotel which served meals, and rooms were scarce. The mode of transportation was horse and buggy. The language was no problem for many Polish people lived in the immediate area.

There were no Negroes in Gary, but immigrants were from many countries.

The meals were cooked in one pot. Each person purchased their meat and tied it with a different colored string. All the meat was cooked together and the flavors blended from each meat. Of course, each person looked for their meat by the color of the string----and it was an understanding if the string became lost, all loose pieces were shared by the people who could not find their piece of string-tied meat.

She became employed in a restaurant so that they could save money. She was employed as a cook. After many years of saving they went into a butcher shop's business. The meat for their business came in by rail and they had no problem. Only to face disappointment as many purchases were made on promise to pay and failed to do so.

Once again he returned to the mill seeking employment. Ten years later, they purchased their own home at 15th and Georgia Streets. This was a dream that came true. (How today the woman regrets that they did not purchase land. She never envisioned that the value of this land in Gary would be in demand, and they could have purchased many acres since most of the land was sandy or sand dunes.)

For her delivery of her first new born child, she was assisted by other neighbor women. The second child was delivered by a mid-wife, Mrs. Wasiliewski, who came to the home by horse and buggy when she was notified when some came running to her home. There were two doctors in the area, but

were only consulted for major illnesses. The women had believed strongly in the herb man. He wore a vest which was lined with many slot-pockets in which he kept his remedies. These tonics helped many people and they had faith on the mixture curing the illness.

Clothes were made by dressmakers or by the women themselves. Some Jewish salesmen would come to the homes selling material which she would buy only if a special occasion was to happen.

A policeman was always seen "on his beat" and was the one who knew everyone. He was regarded as a friend to the adults and children.

For a special treat for Christmas, a group of mothers purchased a crate of oranges so that their children could have a treat for the holiday. This was their Christmas gift to their children.

The grocery store would be patronized about three times a day, once for each meal. The ice box was a luxury. The services of the ice man was something the children enjoyed. The baker made home deliveries, too. The milkman also came by horse for making home deliveries.

The family and group picnics were the only means of recreation. Each group brought their own food. The children and adults sang Polish songs and talked about Poland. The phonograph had many hours of entertainment for the entire family.

The dentist charged fifty cents (50¢) a visit, but it would take about four visits to fill one tooth and usually on the fifth visit, he would pull the tooth. The street car fare was 5¢. It was a rare treat to ride the street car, for usually the people would walk to their destination. The children attended Froebel School. The Roman Catholic church was of no aid to the immigrants. The church was only for the holding of services and for other religious functions.

Today, she resides at 11th and Maryland Streets and remembers her first glimpse of Gary-----and can hardly believe that she did see it grow from the sand dunes to the present busy, crowded city of many people.

II. Mrs. Mary Kowaliewicz

Mrs. Kowaliewicz arrived in New York in 1911. She had wished to stay with a sister in Chicago, but was refused. So, she proceeded to an aunt in Wilmington, Delaware. She had jobs of housework until she saved enough money to go visit her sister in Chicago. Once arriving in Chicago, she made contact with other Polish immigrants who found a place for her to stay.

She sought employment from an agency for \$5.00, which was their fee for obtaining her a job at a twine factory at Mc Cormick. After working there for several weeks, she had an accident where she almost lost her hand. She said that this accident caused her to fear this type of machine work, so she quit.

She returned to the agency and paid an additional \$5.00 and was given a job at Kuppenheimers as a sewing machine operator sewing mens' coats. She practiced at home all evening on making buttonholes by hand. She then asked to be given a better job on making the button holes. She was given a test on making button holes, and she did pass the test. Her new job meant an additional \$3.00 per week in pay. The hours were long, the pay was small and an error at the sewing machine might cost a week's pay. The hours varied from 10 to 16 hours per day, but no overtime pay was given. One had to work until the job was completed.

Language provided little difficulty in the shop as someone always understood Polish. However, when going to a grocery store, it was always pointing or hand type motions telling the grocer what she wanted. She finally attended a night school in a neighborhood school. Her one desire was to attend a hairdresser's school. The cost of \$60.00 came only with sacrificing of meals and saving every penny.

In 1919, she came here as a bride of a man she only saw a few times. He had a tavern business at 15th and Connecticut Street.

Her big moment was when she opened a business in her husband's building. The beauty parlor did a large volume of business. The women came for all special occasions. She was in business for 35 years. During her period as a hairdresser, she had sent for a niece from Poland to come to Gary and live with her, since she and her husband were childless.

However, today she only can think of the "good ole days" as her life savings is at a low minimum.

III. Mrs. Helen Winter

She departed Poland at the age of eighteen from a rural area near Kalisz. Her passage had been paid by her aunt who lived in Chicago. She arrived in 1921 at Ellis Island, New York. Her feeling about coming to the United States was very enthusiastic about the opportunities available for self-betterment. Upon arriving in this country, she had no money. The examination was very rigid and she was fearful of not being accepted in this country.

Directly from New York, she went to Chicago. Her accommodations consisted of one bedroom in a home she shared with relatives. Employment was no problem. She began working at Kuppenheimers a few days after her arrival in Chicago. For working eight hours a day, she was paid a salary of \$5.00 or \$25.00 per week. This salary averaged to 62.5¢ per hour for seamstress work. The working conditions were good,--- ofcourse one must realize this was a first in many experiences to come in a new country. After being in America for six months, she did not hear the English language nor did she become acquainted with other Americans who spoke English. Everyone with whom she was acquainted spoke Polish in the factory, at home and in the streets.

The big city life was fascinating . Her first job and making her own money was an enjoyment. Her pay checks did not go too far as "board" was paid to her aunt. Also, she made gradual payments to her aunt for paying her passage way from Poland. The city entertainment was also taken advantage of to the fullest. The language presented no problems for the factory had many Polish employees in addition to a Polish speaking supervisor.

As time progresses, she has met a man through a mutual friend. Her new beau was Peter Winter, who had arrived from Poznan, Poland to the United States in 1913. He was a skilled worker, but found difficulty in obtaining employment. He was a carpenter by trade and an excellent cabinet maker, but had held a variety of jobs from baker to a coffin maker. When World War I broke out, he felt a certain obligation to serve his new country and joined the Army Engineer Corp. Upon his return from his Army tour of duty, he returned to Chicago but shortly after several months, he found employment in Gary. The construction work was a growing business. He had also purchased land in Gary. This is the reason why after being married in Chicago the couple settled in Gary.

Because of Peter being a longer resident in the United States, he had accumulated some money. He built their first home on the land he had purchased in Glen Park. This was done on a strictly cash basis.

This community proved to be different for Helen as she had been used to shopping in a Polish neighborhood. But, over the years, she had become familiar with the English language. She had attended some classes while working in Chicago. Her husband who spoke English very well also taught her the English language at home. In Gary, she attended the Americanization classes at their Roman Catholic church, Holy Family Parish. These classes were sponsored by the church with an English speaking instructor with classes meeting three times a week for the purpose of helping the immigrants in obtaining their citizenship of the United States.

In the new "American community" no foreigners lived on their particular block. This did not prove to be a handicap as they accepted her in a very warm manner. The neighbors offered help in many instances, such as trading recipes, and in doing small favors for each other. The area was at 4401 Carolina Street which was sparsely populated. However, all city services were offered in this area, which made living comfortable. The neighbors accepted them for their home was built on actually two city lots and the home was a very large one, which was well landscaped and was not detrimental to the neighborhood. This couple had two children who had no language problems. Polish was spoken in the home, but outside the home the English language was spoken. The children attended the Riley Grade School. The mother participated in the school's activities and felt no rejection by the faculty even though she spoke a broken English. This school held no examining policy of the hair or for other personal hygiene reasons.

The depression era left this family facing many financial problems as all their money was lost in the banks closing. The home was not lost being it was all paid for in the prior years during building. The father was unable to find employment until the W.P.A. program began. On his "new Job" he lined the streets to be built and received \$15.00 per week. As time progresses, the building trades began to hire men and he again resumed his carpenter's work. After some political affiliation with the Democratic Party, Peter received a job as the city carpenter for the Gary Park Board.

This family was upholding the religion of their fathers, and the religion to which they new---that of the Roman Catholic Church.

However, after a few experiences with a certain parish, their views of their religion began to change. One example which I thought was interesting was that the family had weekly envelopes in which contributions were placed which were given to the church during the collection. But, before you could enter the church, another "donation" of 25¢ per person was requested. Because of many other reasons, a break with the Roman Catholic Church occurred and prompted this family to join a newly organized church. This new church is the Polish National Catholic church. This church was organized in response to the many Poles who wished a break with the Roman dominated church. It was truly Polish in every way. Many social functions were held strictly in the Polish way. The parish priests held Saturday morning language classes for the children to preserve the mother tongue---Polish.

The Polish baptisms, weddings, funerals are still held with the old traditions. The weddings consist of meals, drinking and lively music. The bride has the unveiling with a group surrounding her singing "Seven Angels" and then the tradition apron is placed around her waist to which she now assumes her new role as a housewife. Some weddings still maintain the tradition with dancing with the bride for a fee, although this has not been too popular in recent years. Then the "Grand March" is held where the guests give a monetary gift --- at this time everyone kisses the bride and groom and wishing them luck. Years ago, the wedding would last all night and then the following day.

Funerals are held in a similar manner. A large meal and reception is given the guests in appreciation for their attendance and this is a final good-bye for the departed soul----usually anything but a sad farewell.

These were ways in which the Polish people spent their time socially. All of their large social get-togethers always included their church. To the Poles, this is important.

Recreation for this family consisted of going to the Marquette Park and Beach. There they enjoyed picnics and swimming in Lake Michigan. The South Gleason Park was an area for summer fun for the children with its swimming pool facilities. The Fourth of July celebration was an annual event held at South Gleason Park, especially for the beautiful fireworks display. The entire family walked--- about two miles to the park for an evening of community entertainment. In the wintertime, there was ice skating at this same park. The Roxy Theater was a weekly event as they offered free dishes on Wednesday nights.

The opportunity for advancing was still here for this Polish immigrant family. Land was purchased in the year 1940 on 43rd and Broadway. This time, commercial property was built and they became proprietors of a children's wearing apparel store. The mother and her two daughters conducted business for eleven years.

This case is in contrast to the other cases for the living conditions were extremely good and were not typical of the ghetto area.

IV. Mrs. B. Ciastka

She came in 1913 and was detained at Ellis Island until her father came for her. A telegram was sent to New York city notifying him of her arrival. Upon her arrival, her father took her by horse and buggy to buy her a new wardrobe. Her father had come to this country earlier to secure money and then return to Poland.

They lived in New York on 17th Avenue B and only a few blocks away was a job agency that was helping the immigrants to obtain a job. The agency collected a \$3.00 fee from the employer. She had been hired to do housework for a Jewish family. She helped herself to learn the English language by working for this family. The family taught her many new words in English. She received room and board in addition to \$10.00 per month pay. Time off was every second Sunday, that was spent with her father. He was unable to keep her as he himself boarded with other men in a home.

In 1914, the father had decided to return to Poland as the World War stood to separate him and his family. She remained with a great feeling of loneliness. But, other relatives who were planning to return to Poland were not able to do so because of the war conditions. Not only the war prevented their return, but their money and tickets for the voyage to Poland were in the "Seventh Polish Bank" and the bank had gone bankrupt the day they were to sail.

So all the relatives then went to Newark, New Jersey where they had friends. This did not work out too well---employment was not too readily available. From there, she had gone to New London, Connecticut. In Connecticut she had found employment in a quilt and silk mill owned by

Armstrong and Son Company. Her board was 25¢ per day which also included her room. In New London, she met her husband. Then she and her husband went to Cleveland, Ohio where he had been employed in the steel mills. He had earned \$100.00 for every two weeks worked. Relatives brought them to the Chicago area for obtaining better employment. Then in 1926, they came to Gary, Indiana. In Gary, he returned to the steel mill type of employment. They lived in one bedroom at Dobis's Boarding House on 11th Avenue. It was only for a year that they lived here and saved enough money to purchase lots in Glen Park. In 1927, they built their present home with cash.

V. Mrs. Naminski

Mrs. Naminski came to the United States in 1913 to live in Massachusetts with an aunt. The area was mostly French settled. She was employed as a weaver in a textile mill for ten hours a day which paid \$1.50 per day. Her board was \$5.00 a month, but she furnished her own food. The town had many women. It was normal for five women to share one room with "bed bugs". These five women all came to Gary, Indiana as one of them had a relative here. The town was to be a good place to find a husband, due to the many men working in the steel mills.

In 1919, they arrived in Gary and a jitney driver took them to 25th and Monroe Streets. They stayed at a home at this address helping in domestic work by caring for the cows, cleaning the rooms and any other time of domestic work which was to be performed. Soon, they all did find husbands!

Her first home was at 19th and Delaware. The street car fare was 5¢ to ride. For recreation they walked to Tyler Park on 15th Avenue and spent the afternoon talking and playing cards. (The west side of Gary at this time was heavily settled with Poles.)

The children attended St. Hedwig's School. The church was of no assistance to the immigrants. Infact, this family did leave the Roman Catholic Church because of the heavy financial burden imposed on them and they joined the newly formed Polish National Catholic Church.

Boarders were a good way of earning an income and at the same time, help was extended to a countryman. In her five room home, there were twelve people living here. One couple rented a bedroom. In the dining room three beds were set up.

There were other boarders set up in the basement. Meals were the cheapest and when the men were not working, they ate very lightly----mostly soups. But once work resumed, meat was again on the diet. (Pork chops at this time cost only 10¢ per pound.) The big problem which existed was that the men worked shift work. Meals and lunches were continuously prepared.

Although they had always planned to return to Poland with their accumulated wealth, somehow they became Americanized and found a new home at last.

VI. Mr. Niesciur

Mr. Niesciur had a rich relative living in the Pennsylvania area. He always sent money remembering the folks at home in Poland. This meant only one thing, that he would some day do the same if he had the opportunity to go to America.

In 1915, he joined his "rich uncle" in the coal mines of Pennsylvania. But the hours and work was unbelievable. The cold, darkness, and dirt led to a health problem. He lasted only two months. A co-worker felt the same and they had heard of Gary, Indiana and its steel mills, so they decided that this would be the city for them.

After walking for hours they found another Polish immigrant who took them to his room and let them spend the night there. Living at 13th and Madison, they found it convenient to walk to their new jobs at the steel mill.

They also found crowds of hundreds waiting for a job outside the gates to the mills. When a specific job needed a worker, they called into the crowd for such an employee. An example was when they needed an experienced man for a wheel barrow, he volunteered---only to find out experienced meant just that. The planks were narrow and you had to stay on them. But, this opened the door for employment in other jobs. For ten hours worked, he was paid \$1.75. The most he could save per pay was 50¢ after he met other expenses.

The bosses were most Germans who really had no great affection for the Poles. In taverns after work, if the boss was there, you always bought him a drink---hoping for a "break".

The boss would keep a close watch on the men by hiding and seeing who was doing his work. If he felt you did not work diligently enough, he would have you fired with no explanation. There were many fights between the bosses and the men. The union was an answer to the working man's prayer.

VII. Mrs. Pasko

Mrs. Pasko arrived in 1939 and came immediately to Gary at the age of twelve. Her aunt was overjoyed at her arrival, but the uncle felt that she should earn her room and board.

She was given an immediate job as a babysitter for a Greek family. The greatest problem was the lack of communication. The children would not listen to her. She begged her uncle to look for other employment.

Mercy Hospital needed a dishwasher and even though she was 13 years old, the job was hers. The hours were until the the dishes were washed.

Up to this time, there was no schooling given to her. It was considered a waste of time to educate the girls. Language was still a problem. She was so eager to learn and the cooks at Mercy Hospital decided to teach her. They instructed her that whenever the nuns would come into the kitchen that she should say, "Go to Hell". Ofcourse, she practiced this with the thought in mind that she was saying to them "How are you"? The joke ended on the cooks, because the nuns became very upset with them and they were demoted to do the dishes. It was then that the nuns took it upon themselves to teach the new immigrants the English language.

With the nuns' help, her uncle had her attend school. Her only recreation was her work and to attend school. She had became very unhappy with the other immigrants because they (the other immigrants) never admitted that they were Poles from Poland. They had all become Americanized and wished to remain so.

VIII. Mr. S. Pawinski

Mr. S. Pawinski who has been an established Polish funeral director in Gary related that many harsh cases were revealed in their establishment.

The case of an immigrant from Poland who had not been in this area for long and had a wife and nine children is very interesting. He died leaving the wife in bewilderment. She had no money but felt she might be able to raise something to help with the funeral expenses. Her first request to Mr. Pawinski was to go with her to the church to make the funeral arrangements for the church service. The parish priest of the Polish Roman Catholic church was aware of her situation but informed her of the priest's fee of \$40.00. This fee was for the funeral mass. Mr. Pawinski felt that this charge was unreasonable and unfair, so he told the priest that he would contact him later himself to complete the arrangements. Upon leaving the church, he explained to the woman that there was another possibility. They went to an Irish priest. The Irish priest listened to the situation. The charge was only \$10.00 and the funeral arrangements were made at this church. Mr. Pawinski did not charge the woman at all to bury her husband. However, as the years had past, the woman did come back and gave some money to Mr. Pawinski for his services.

I think this helps to clarify what little role the churches played in the role of helping the Polish immigrant. To begin with, a parishioner should have been given this funeral service with out any charge what-so-ever by the parish priest.

Since man's death is usually the most conspicuous incident in his life, attracting attention and interest of his group and acts as a judgement on the status of his family. The Polish families are notorious for lavish funeral expenditures. It is time to cry and then the funeral is followed by a feasty dinner which can be made to appear as a happy time and not a sad affair. Some fraternal organizations met his needs at this time, and the family remains true to them throughout the years.

Names of Individuals Contacted for Case Studies:

Mrs. B. Dolata

Mrs. A. Kowaliewicz

Mrs. H. Winter

Mrs. B. Ciastka

Mrs. C. Naminski

Mr. J. Niesciur

Mrs. A. Pasko

Mr. S. Pawinski

Places Contacted:

1. Polish Daily News - "Dziennik Chicagoski"
1521 West Haddon Street
Chicago, Illinois
2. The Polish Daily Zgoda - "Dziennik Zwiazkowy"
1201 North Milwaukee Avenue
Chicago, Illinois
3. The Polish National Alliance
1520 West Division Street
Chicago, Illinois
4. Polish-American Historical Association
North Milwaukee Avenue
Chicago, Illinois
5. The Polish-American Congress
1200 North Ashland Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

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